



"THE  
HARVEST  
INDEED  
IS  
GREAT,  
BUT  
THE  
LABORERS  
ARE  
FEW.  
"PRAY  
YE  
THEREFORE

THE  
LORD  
OF  
THE  
HARVEST,  
THAT  
HE  
SEND  
LABORERS  
INTO  
HIS  
HARVEST."

St. Luke x- 2

The  
Messenger  
of Our Lady  
of Africa

Published by  
THE WHITE SISTERS OF AFRICA

METUCHEN

NEW JERSEY

# Investment 100 for 1



Piously folding their little hands together, every day these dear little ones ask their protectress, *the Little Flower*, to shower heavenly roses on their benefactors who give them bread.

At St. Charles Orphanage Africa, there are over a hundred of them who have but one fault: that of having a *ferocious appetite*.



Bread  
for my Lambs  
please

Bread for an orphan for a month \$1.00..... for a year \$10.00

## Several Good Ways to Help the Missionary Sisters



The perpetual adoption of a Missionary Sister.....	\$2,500.00
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To support a dispensary for a year.....	40.00
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To keep a sanctuary lamp burning for a month.....	1.00

## Spiritual Favors and Advantages

All those who help the missions in one way or another will share in the Masses, prayers, and good works offered up daily by the Missionaries and the natives for their Benefactors.

Three Masses are celebrated every month for the intentions of the Benefactors.

## Special Favors Granted to the Members of the Guilds

1. A plenary indulgence following the Ordinary Conditions:
  - (a) The day they join the Guild.
  - (b) On the following feasts: Immaculate Conception, St. Augustine, St. Monica, St. Peter and St. Francis Xavier.
2. Masses said for them after their death at no matter what Altar will procure for their souls the same favors as if they had been celebrated at a privileged altar.

Persons who would like to avail themselves of these privileges, by becoming members of one of these Guilds may apply to either of the following Promoters, who will be pleased to furnish the necessary information:

Miss Helen Boland, 35 Madison Avenue, Jersey City.  
Mrs. Roman Smith, Jr., South River, New Jersey.

## RECOMMENDATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE BISHOP OF TRENTON, N. J.

Dear Reverend Mother:

I am indeed pleased to recommend most heartily the Apostolic work of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. You are laboring in your own quiet way, and in accordance with the wishes of our Holy Father, Pius XI, gloriously reigning, solely that Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, may be better known and better loved by those for whom he gave His life on the Cross that all men might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Any assistance given you will be rewarded by the Saviour Himself, who has promised: "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." I am sure such a labor of love needs no further commendation to the good priests and faithful people of the Diocese of Trenton.

Wishing you every blessing in your noble work, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

MOSES T. KILEY,

Bishop of Trenton.

July 24, 1934.

For information apply to Rev. Mother Superior, 319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J.

# The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa



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## A Mission Exhibit



Under the skillful management of Very Reverend Monsignor John Hilpert, diocesan director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, of Brooklyn, N. Y., a Mission Exhibit will be held at Columbus Council, Knights of Columbus, One Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, from October the fifteenth to the twenty-second.

Monsignor Hilpert has most kindly given us a booth at the exposition. We are very grateful to him for this wonderful opportunity to make known our works.

All our friends are cordially invited to visit us at the exhibition.

# The Babyra



THE MISSION of Mudizi Maria or Bunia is situated on a plain about 3,500 feet above sea level in the Apostolic Prefecture of Lake Albert. The climate is rather pleasant and wholesome. There are two rainy seasons, a short one in March or April and a longer one in September and October. It is during these two seasons that the ground is cultivated; the other months being too dry, are unfavorable for this work.

The crops consist of maize, sweet potatoes, beans, manioc, sorghum, and, in some places, bananas. The natives also eat wild plants and gather certain herbs for medicinal purposes, which they use even in the most serious cases.

## POPULATION:

The Bunia region is inhabited by the Babyra Tribe, a half-savage people. The population is about 40,000. Their language, the Kibira, being divided into two distinct classes of words, one applied to animate beings and the other to inanimate objects, presents no serious difficulties.

The women are little better than slaves. They adorn themselves in a barbarous fashion with a disk of smoke-blackened wood set in the upper lip—the latter is cut to hold it. These disks measure from four to five inches in diameter and from three-quarters to one inch in thickness. The custom dates, it is said, from the Arab invasion, when the women took this means of disfiguring themselves so that the enemy would not be tempted by their beauty to carry them off to be wives or slaves. This hideous ornament is sometimes embellished with colored beads, and in time of mourning, the usual disk is replaced by a slice of a banana trunk horizontally cut from the tree. This custom, however, is dying out, owing to a law enforced by the Government.

Another peculiar feature of the women's attire is the traditional skirt worn by the little girl as well as by the grand-mother. It is made of banana tree fiber which is dried in the sun and wound five or six strands together into a sort of string. Lengths of this string are hung on a narrow belt of the same fibre which is passed around the loins. This skirt, in the native woman's opinion, constitutes a dress for all occasions and she further adorns herself by having her face tattooed and her eyelashes plucked.

Bracelets are very popular. They are made of brass or copper wire and from twenty to thirty are worn on each arm and leg. The children wear strings of small bells around their ankles. Beads are profusely used for ornaments strung into necklaces and bracelets. Large beads, arranged in various colored designs, are used to make belts.

The filing of the teeth into sharp points and the covering of the hair with a red powder, which melts in the sun and forms a kind of varnish, are other distinguishing marks of this tribe.

By nature, the Babyras are reticent, undemonstrative, inconstant and unreliable. They are proud and resent the slightest insult. Possessing moderate intelligence, they are not the most backward among the negroes.

## OCCUPATIONS:

The natives cultivate small pieces of land which suffice for their needs and they tend their flocks, but above all they are traders. They frequent the markets exchanging baskets, clay jars of different kinds and pitchers for farm produce, maize, sorghum or fish. They also buy these things in one place to sell them in another for profit.

Morning finds the Mubyra woman spreading corn, sorghum and manioc in the sun which, when dried, she crushes in a wooden mortar with a stick. Then she hurries off to market to bargain these and to gossip with her neighbors. In the evening she goes after her supply of water and wood and in her spare time she makes the "chungu" clay jars of different sizes used as waterpots as well as to cook vegetables and sauce. At meal time, the family squats on the ground around the "chungu" and each in turn—when not all together—helps himself with the aid of Father Adam's fork. The sauce is served in but one "chungu"; little shells, sticks of wood or even leaves take the place of spoons.

Knives of various sizes, shapes and origin are made from any discarded piece of steel, tin or iron. We learned, at our cost, that a nail may also be fashioned into a knife. A Sister having driven some nails into the frame work of a window needing repairs found that they had disappeared the next day. It was not until we had seen several little boys proudly exhibiting new knives that we discovered the fate of the nails!

At night, the housewife must carefully bank up her fire with ashes; otherwise, she will be obliged to beg some embers from her neighbor next morning. There are no matches; so, year in and year out, the precious flame is kept. A provision of wood is always on hand and from time to time a few small sticks are thrown on the fire. A Negress takes time; she is never in a hurry; and a delay of two, three, or even more hours does not worry her in the least. As to the rest of the household furnishings, they are about the same as those of 4,000 B. C.

## RELIGION AND NATIVE CUSTOMS

The Babyra do not adore idols. They have a vague belief in a superior beneficent Being; but they also believe in evil spirits, who are blamed for all misfortunes. To propitiate them sacrifices are offered in little grass huts from ten to fifteen inches high. Amulets, such as animal hair, an odd-shaped piece of wood, or a string tied around the wrist or ankle serving as a charm, are worn for protection against the evil spirits.

When a child is born the mother rejoices and if her first born is a boy her joy knows no bounds. For three days the child must not be taken from the hut; on the fourth day a name, which is dictated by the circumstances surrounding its birth, is given to the baby, thus: "Simandugu," I have no brother; "Bascha," girl; "Manuyanga," thin; "Budzume," worry; "bakanoba," they hate her, a name given to a daughter in a large family of girls when a boy was expected; or "Mundizadudu," he awaits the earth, because all the other children of the family have died.

For some days after the birth of a baby, the neighbors bring the mother wood, water and food. During the first few weeks the baby is carried in its mother's arms; but

# Pyra Tribe

after that, the little black cherub is rolled in a piece of cloth or a piece of matting and slung on the mother's back; or, at times, it is held astride the mother's lap. The baby accompanies the mother to the field, where she cultivates; to church and even into the confessional. The women have no notion of hygiene and mothers care for their children in their own way; they dose the little ones with native medicine and if an abscess must be lanced, the rough native knife is used. Every morning the child is bathed and rubbed. As to its clothing, it does not need to be washed for the simple reason that it has none. When the mother carries the baby on her back she covers it with a goat-skin to protect it from the sun. If she is going to dig, she lays her darling on the bare ground; but if the tiny rogue objects to its hard bed, she picks it up, slings it on her back again and proceeds with her work. The children grow up in the open air; the boys fish or tend the flock; the girls help their mothers care for the little brothers and sisters, chase away the birds from the crops and carry wood and water.

A girl never chooses her partner for life but marries the man of her father's choice who must pay the dowry agreed on for the girl. This may be paid with goats or oxen or with money. Long ago tools or cloth were accepted in payment. "Those were the good old days," the ancients say.

Before her marriage a young girl becomes acquainted with her future parents-in-law; custom demands that she grow up under their eyes. Thus, they will know if she is a good worker; if not, she will not be accepted. The girl will have a happy life if she has a large family; if she is childless she is likely to be sent back to her home. Polygamy exists among the natives. When a woman loses her husband by death, she is robbed of all her belongings, even of her clothes, and she is reduced to cover herself with the leaves of the banana tree. During six months she wears on her neck, in sign of mourning, a stone covered with red clay. The husband is buried with all his personal belongings,

his pipe, his calabash and his clothes, so that his spirit may be satisfied and may not haunt the living.

The Mission of Mudzi Maria was opened but twelve years ago and the converts number over 5,000. Each year the mission counts many new families who, leaving aside the superstitious customs of their ancestors, embrace the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Every six months large classes of catechumens, on passing their final examination, receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Thus a month ago ninety adults and twenty babies, their children, were received into the Church.

May the good examples of these neophytes lead their heathen brethren to seek peace and salvation in the One Fold.

SR. MARIE GODELIEVA,  
W. S.



Making Clay Jars

## ADVICE GIVEN TO THE YOUNG BRIDE

"Do not forget that you are a Christian, you must stay with your husband and be very obedient to him.

"If he beats you, go to the Priests and Sisters, but do not quarrel.

"Never practise the pagan customs, never attend their feasts or dances.

"Always try to please your husband. Give him good food.

"See that your children are well trained and sent to school early. . . . So that they may be your pride later!

"You are dressed in pretty new garments, it will not be thus every day; marriage is not rest but labor."

## A GRANDMOTHER TO HER DYING GRAND-DAUGHTER

"My daughter, do not be afraid of dying; death is not bad, it is to go and see Jesus. I have taught you to know Him, you are soon going to see what you have learned. You are happier than I; I can only believe, but you are going to see.

"Margaret, do not fear death, what you must fear is not to possess Jesus! My Daughter, you are going to leave; I can not follow you now.

"Cling to Jesus, He is the One who will save you."

## A Rare Anniversary



A Visit to the Tents

IT was on the sixth of July, 1873, in a modest little chapel just outside the city of Algiers, that Sister Suzanne and, some months later on the twenty-first of December, Sisters Denise and Cyprienne, made their vows of obedience, poverty and chastity and promised to devote their lives to the great and sublime work of the regeneration of the Mohammedans and pagans of Africa. They had heard the commandment of the risen Lord: "Go teach all Nations," that has reechoed throughout nineteen centuries in the hearts of valiant souls. Leaving all for the love of Christ, they set sail for the mysterious Dark Continent to enter a nascent Congregation that had been founded by Cardinal Lavigerie.

The illustrious Prelate had also left, a few years previously, the surroundings of the renowned See of Nancy. He had exiled himself from his native land and all that he held dear for one purpose only: the evangelization of Africa for which cause he founded the Society of the White Fathers. However, the laws of the Koran, forbidding a Mohammedan woman to be seen by any other men than those of her nearest kinship, decided the foundation of a Congregation of Sisters to cooperate with the Missionary Fathers in christianizing the native women.

This community was still in its cradle when our three Sisters arrived on African soil and they were initiated to the Founder's ardent zeal and Christ-like love of souls. Poverty, want, and privation were their daily bread; but, understanding only too well that sacrifice is the price of souls, they did not complain. Furthermore, when one day in a moment of discouragement, seeing the Sisters in need of the bare necessities of life with no means of procuring them, the Prelate was tempted to abandon his project and send the Sisters back to their country: "Rather die of hardships," they declared.

Young and ardent, the newly made spouses of Christ would have gladly propagated the immense love of God for His creatures; but, due to the fanaticism of the Mohammedans who people Northern Africa, the Founder had judged it better to be prudent. In humble submission they contented themselves with proving the truth of the Gospel by every form of Christian charity that, for the followers of the Prophet, proved more eloquent than words.

Abandoned and homeless children were given a shelter and found a mother's affection and devotion within it. The most repulsive natives, who because of their loathsome diseases or wounds were cast out and rejected by their own, found a home in the hospitals that had been built with alms solicited by the Cardinal. The soothing effects of being nursed with kindness and charity, which they had never be-

fore experienced, made the natives cry out: "Sister, you do for me what my own mother would not do. You are so good; your religion must surely be good." How easy it was then for the Sisters to enlighten their patients and, O, who can conceive the uttermost joy that filled their souls when a moribund, believing and accepting the truths of our faith, asked to be baptized. And who can begin to estimate the effects that the Sisters' charitable visits to the villages produced on the natives while nursing the sick and the dying, consoling the afflicted, in a word relieving every misery. With Saint Paul they could say: "I became all things to all men that I might save all."

Workrooms were opened where the little girls, while learning the oriental arts, were given lessons in moral training. The condition of the women, who are considered nothing more than beasts of burden, was greatly bettered by giving them work to do at home. A husband, seeing his wife capable of earning, treats her with a little deference and thinks twice before putting her aside. Better still, by their repeated visits to the villages the Sisters have won the natives' confidence, and with confidence what can not be done? Under the Missionaries' influence the Mohammedan mentality is gradually changing and the way to conversions in greater number is being paved.

Thus during sixty long years our three Sisters have been laboring for the salvation of souls. They have taught Nations! The Congregation in which they entered has left its swaddling clothes. Following in the footsteps of their seniors, more than a thousand White Sisters, scattered in the cities, in the mountain villages, throughout the great Sahara and around the Great Lakes of Africa endeavor to spread the Kingdom of Christ in one hundred and thirty missions.

Our pioneer Sisters have seen Catholic villages spring forth one after the other, not only among the negroes of Equatorial Africa but even among the Mohammedan tribes. They have also seen the children's children of the first converts to the fourth generation. Little negro boys, who received their first instructions from the Sisters, have heard the call of God and have received the sacrament of Holy Orders while numerous young girls have entered the native Novitiate and are now collaborating with the Missionaries in teaching their race.

Dear Sisters, you have borne the burden of the day. You have been the humble auxiliaries of the White Fathers in tilling the soil and watering it with your sweat. Now that God has given the fecundity and the harvest is white to

(Continued on page 137)

## A Rare Anniversary

(Continued from page 136)

reaping, your questioning eyes, still glowing with Christ-like charity, scrutinize the horizon:

"Will laborers come to reap the abundant harvest?"

Yes, dear Sisters, your labors have not been in vain, you have brought forth fruit and your fruit shall remain. A legion of self-sacrificing Sisters, inspired by your examples, after leaving all for the love of Christ, will continue your work with earnestness. They will cooperate with the Missionary Fathers until the day shall dawn when there will be but one Fold and one Shepherd on the Dark Continent enlightened.

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## Acknowledgments

St. John's School, So. Orange, for the adoption of Francis Xavier.

Our Lady Help of Christian School, Orange, for the adoption of Therese John.

Miss Sullivan, Brooklyn, N. Y., to build a hut for a leper.

Mrs. Caufield and a friend, for the support of a leper in a hut.

Mrs. Caufield, Brooklyn, N. Y., to keep a lamp burning in a Mission.

Bread for our orphans, Miss Thibodeau and Mrs. Saulnier, Nova Scotia.

Stamps, tinfoil and various articles useful for the Missions from the pupils of several schools and many friends.

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## Obituary

Our readers are asked to pray for the peaceful repose of the souls of:

Mr. Joseph Broedel, Mrs. Elizabeth Norris, Mrs. McGovern, Mr. George Norris of Jersey City, Mrs. Oliver Casey of Philadelphia, who were active members of our Lady of Africa Guild, New Jersey.

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## Stamps! Stamps!

The White Sisters would be grateful to all those who would send to them their cancelled stamps, tinfoil, etc.

## Guy de Fontgalland



A Secretariate has been opened recently at the White Sisters' Convent, 319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, New Jersey, in favor of Guy de Fontgalland's cause which is now introduced at Rome.

Relics, pictures and positions asking the Holy Father for the beatification of this privileged child will be sent to any who applies for them at the Convent.

Favors obtained through his intercession should be reported to the Secretariate where offerings are also received in behalf of the same cause.

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## Echoes of Africa

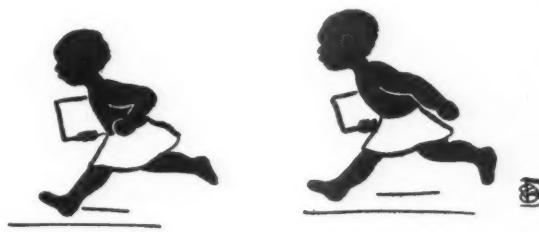
### AN EXCURSION

Whilst going to visit a Christian child, we were accompanied by two young girls.

"The tooth-tree! the tooth-tree!" exclaimed the children. A tree with teeth . . . it was rather strange . . . but when we came nearer the mystery was solved.

The two girls had broken two small branches about ten inches long, removed the bark, and chewed one end of it . . . behold . . . a tooth-brush, but no trade mark "Made in U. S. A." They briskly brushed their teeth, which became white as snow; no water, tooth-paste nor folding case. Used once, it was burned by the roadside. God in His infinite goodness has even made tooth-brushes grow.

May we as well as our little negroes thank Him for His Divine Providence!



# The Ravages of the Cricket at Laghouat

WE produce here a letter written recently, by the Superior of Laghouat Mission. (South of Algeria.) It contains the description of a terrible plague and it is an appeal for aid in favor of many poor natives striving against the but too real famine.

"The oasis of Laghouat is much appreciated by the Europeans who visit the desert; they enjoy particularly the unexpected coolness of its green gardens. I would like to tell you all about the natural charms of our oasis, together with the comfort it gives to our hearts of Missionaries, but today, these very charms no longer exist. . . . The rapid passage of LOCUSTS this terrible plague which originated in Egypt, has been the cause of the invasion of the numberless crickets against which every one is now struggling. The most stricken zone is ours. All the energetic expedients used for three weeks, failed to destroy these unwelcome and voracious invaders. The gardens, the only riches of the oasis, are totally devastated. No more vegetables and fruit are to be found, the trees are leafless as in mid-winter, even the hearts of the big palm trees are affected by these unmanageable insects.

"The Houses are invaded and it is with great difficulty that we protect our clothes and manage to preserve some food. A native woman told us yesterday: 'I cannot make my "couscous", the crickets eat it as quickly as I prepare it.' What shall I put in my sauce? I have nothing left. . . .

"The wells, 'seguias' are contaminated by those pests and the pastures are absolutely bare, the animals are doomed to die of starvation.

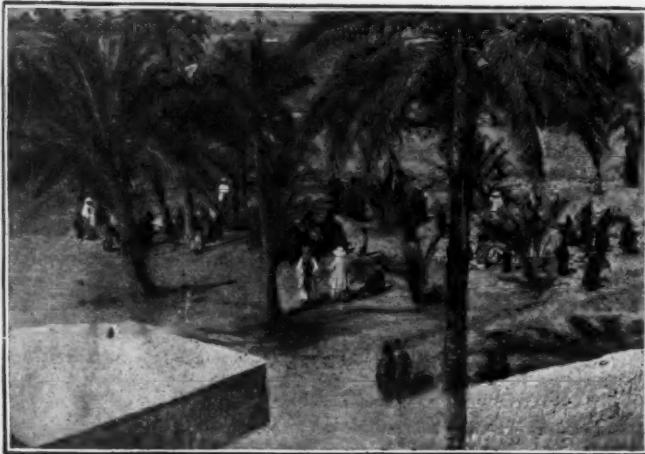
"How gloomy is the present, and still more so, the future! The crickets are destroyed by thousands of millions at a time, but twenty-four hours later, they are just as numerous; we have been told that a great quantity comes from Morocco. The fight leaves behind unwholesome bodies which cause diseases and miseries of all kinds. This is the usual consequence of such an invasion.

"This scourge which spreads everywhere, that nothing can stop, and that destroys all, has something terrible, almost tragical.

"The natives terrified and confused, say all day long: 'God punishes us, we do not serve Him well enough and we misuse his gifts! You, Sisters, you do not act like this. Amen.'

"Such a religious thought is touching, and although it does not contain all the perfection desired, it is nevertheless sincere. Their sufferings are somewhat alleviated by this self-acknowledgment.

"Will God, who clothes the flower of the field and who gives food to the birds, let die from cold and hunger, his



Oasis of Laghouat

Sisters, 319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J., who will have them forwarded.

children of the desert, after this terrible plague?

"Is it not more than ever, to say 'Our Father, who art in heaven. . . . Thy will be done . . . ' and by the intervention of those who love Thee, of those who have been favored with wealth, please give to all 'the daily bread!'"

We are confident that this urgent appeal will be heard by all Catholics able to help the African Missions in such a great distress. Alms no matter how small, may be addressed to The White



## Prayer for the Conversion of Africa

O thou, Our Lady of Africa, whose stainless heart is full of mercy and maternal compassion; consider the deep misery of the Moslems and other infidels of Africa; remember that the souls of these poor infidels are the work of the hands of thy Divine Son, that they have been created to His image and redeemed at the price of His Precious Blood. Do not allow, O Mother of mercy, that these unhappy people, who are like us thy children, should continue to fall into hell, despite the merits of Jesus-Christ and the most cruel death He suffered for their salvation. Obtain for them knowledge of our holy religion, and grace to love, to embrace, and to practise it faithfully. And since thou art the Mistress and Sovereign of Africa, O Queen of the Apostles, be pleased to choose and send legions of holy missionaries to these abandoned countries, to conquer them, to rescue them from death and Satan, and to bring them into the fold of Holy Mother Church. So shall we be all united in one and the same hope and in one and the same love, in thy stainless heart, and in the adorable Heart of thy Divine Son our Lord Jesus-Christ, who was crucified and died for the salvation of all men, and who rose full of glory and liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

Our Lady of Africa, pray for the Moslems and other infidels of Africa.

(100 days. Leo XIII. June 30, 1896.)

